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MACHEL, SAMORA, MOZAMBIQUE (b)(3)

Samora Moïsés MACHEL BF

MOZAMBIQUE

President (since June 1985)

Addressed as: Mr. President

Samora Machel, President since independence, publicly describes himself as a Marxist-Leninist, but US diplomats say that his political and economic decisions are often nonideological. He is widely viewed as the symbol of national unity. Nevertheless, his image has suffered because of his inability to resolve problems, including widespread insurgency and a dormant economy. Machel has recently moved to deflect some public criticism by naming Mario Machungo as Mozambique's first Prime Minister and by appointing a full-time Defense Minister. © (b)(1) (b)(1) (b)(3) (b)(3)

Machel has been careful not to alienate the military, his most important constituency, and has endeavored to build a consensus for his foreign policy initiatives within the hierarchy of the ruling party, FRELIMO. In the past few years he has sought to improve his ties to the West, particularly to the United States, while simultaneously attempting not to antagonize the Soviets, from whom he receives extensive military aid. He visited the Soviet Union in April 1986 and held talks with Mikhail Gorbachev. Machel's relations with the United States continue to be positive. He described his October 1985 US trip as a "rousing success," and a visit by Maureen Reagan to Mozambique earlier this year also went well. he wants the United States to continue to be active in the region and that he deeply appreciates US humanitarian aid and would like to keep all channels to the United States open. (b)(1) (b)(3) (b)(3)

An Assessment of Machel

Energetic, flamboyant, and charismatic, he is an outstanding orator and a witty conversationalist. An adept statesman and politician, he is able to calmly discuss ideological and practical differences and has shown considerable flexibility in dealing with international issues. He tends to dominate conversations and does not like to be interrupted, but he is also a good listener and is usually courteous and patient. (b)(1) (b)(3)

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Early Life and Career

After attending a mission school in Mozambique in the late 1950s, Machel worked in a hospital and took nursing classes at night. He joined FRELIMO in 1963 and subsequently received nine months of guerrilla training in Algeria. By 1966 he had become chief of guerrilla operations—a post he held until the end of the war in 1974. He did not participate

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directly in the transition government that oversaw Portuguese withdrawal (September 1974 – June 1975). Instead, he laid the plans for his country's first independent government from FRELIMO headquarters in Tanzania and returned to Mozambique only one day before his inauguration as President. He is also Commander in Chief of the Mozambican Armed Forces. He holds the military rank of marshal. (b)(3)

Personal Data

He has had eight children by four women—his deceased first wife, two common-law wives, and his current wife. Two of his children are by his current wife, Graça, who serves as Minister of Education and Culture. Machel is a physical fitness enthusiast and likes to jog, do calesthenics, and watch boxing. He speaks Swahili, Portuguese, several tribal languages, and some English, French, Chinese, and Russian. He is a member of the Shangan ethnic group. (b)(1) (b)(3) (b)(3)

29 September 1986

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